

# THOLOS

VOLUME 19

## FEATURE

U.S. Capitol Cleanup

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## COOL TOOLS

The Architect of the Capitol  
Sweeps Up the Past

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## SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

Why Consider a  
COVID Vaccine?



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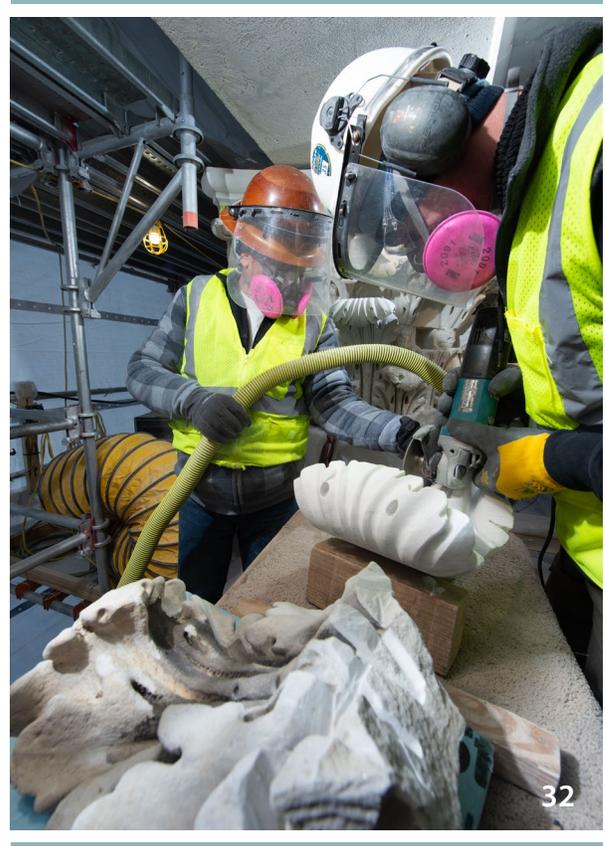
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COOL TOOLS

## THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL SWEEPS UP THE PAST

WRITTEN BY MORGAN GREEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KALEENA DWYER

When Jim Kaufmann, Capitol Grounds and Arboretum Director, happened across an 1891 street-sweeping map while going through cultural landscape reports, he had no idea how simple an old map could make caring for the U.S. Capitol Grounds.

“We use our cultural landscape reports in a number of different aspects to guide our management of the grounds and this was a unique feature that we wouldn’t think would be relevant today. It goes to show how the tradition of caring for the grounds in a professional manner has been around for over 130 years,” said Kaufmann.

**“IT GOES TO SHOW HOW THE TRADITION  
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AROUND FOR OVER 130 YEARS.”**



**Jim Kaufmann, Capitol Grounds and Arboretum Director, pictured with a copy of the 1891 street sweeping map.**

Kaufmann assigned Lee Dennis, Supervisory Facility Operations Specialist, to oversee the new Fiscal Year 2021 street-sweeping operation at the Capitol complex. Dennis studied the 130-year-old map and realized with some modifications the map could still be followed in 2021.

There are more aspects to street maintenance than the original map addressed. In the 1890s, the Capitol complex was much smaller and saw significantly less traffic. The 1891 street sweeper was no modern technological wonder — the sweeper was a groundskeeper with a broom, dustpan, horse and buggy.

“The map really simplifies the importance of each area back then,” said Dennis. The 1890s map, conveniently color coded by frequency of sweeping, will serve as a guideline for Capitol Grounds and Arboretum groundskeepers. For now, with COVID-19 limiting operations to an as-needed basis, Capitol Grounds and Arboretum runs the street sweeper a few times a week with a focus on Capitol Square. When things return to normal, Capitol Square will be color coded green to indicate it will be swept daily. Areas swept three times a

week are coded yellow, areas swept twice a week are coded light blue, and areas swept once a week are coded dark blue.

Not only does street sweeping keep the U.S. Capitol Grounds looking pristine, the technology behind today’s street sweeper has a sustainable and environmental focus as well. The street sweeper is a more efficient way of cleaning the sidewalks and curb lines to keep debris from building up in the catch basins of the storm sewers.

“I can’t help but wonder if any of the recommendations of the street sweeping plans were supported or directed by Frederick Law Olmsted,” Dennis added. Olmsted, regarded as the founder of American landscape architecture, designed the U.S. Capitol Grounds and could have very well overseen a project of this nature.

With millions of visitors each year, caring for the grounds is no easy feat and takes months of expert planning. The history and tradition of caring for the U.S. Capitol Grounds is a celebrated ritual that will continue for generations to come.

**THE HISTORY AND TRADITION OF  
CARING FOR THE U.S. CAPITOL GROUNDS  
IS A CELEBRATED RITUAL THAT WILL  
CONTINUE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**

ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

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a season for  
transformation,  
a season  
for *change*

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WRITTEN BY DR. GANELLA SMITH

There is a sense of change that comes as winter turns into spring and flowers begin to bud. With longer days and more sunshine, it feels like a time for new possibilities and a fresh start. That sums up what it feels like for me right now at the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). We are setting conditions for success by transforming into something new and powerful, something inspiring and enduring. One example is our approach to the agency's core values. With our organizational transformation and Big Rock agency initiatives underway, we have an opportunity to leverage and continue to strengthen our core values with a renewed emphasis on respect, integrity, safety and empowerment (RISE). If you would like more information on RISE, please check out Tholos, Volume 17 or Compass as new information is released.

Speaking of the organizational transformation, I can already see things blossoming all across the AOC. Here are some highlights of the work that has recently begun:

## **VISION 2100 AND THE CAPITOL COMPLEX MASTER PLAN**

Together, Vision 2100 and the Capitol Complex Master Plan (CCMP) will support the AOC's role in securing and preserving the Capitol campus. Vision 2100 will be our road map for the next century, helping us continue to inspire and educate all who visit and work here. The plans established in Vision 2100 will include innovative ideas and best practices from futurists, visionaries and urban planning experts who will help us establish full-sized goals that will guide us in developing our CCMP and our future Strategic Plan. Without an extraordinary vision and successful implementation of that vision through the CCMP and Strategic Plan, many other enterprise initiatives will suffer. We will count on all our stakeholders, which includes you, to help us create the Capitol campus of the future.

## **BUILDING OFFICIAL PROGRAM**

We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our customers and ourselves. Our facilities and grounds host people from around the world; we want this to be a place of safety. To do this, the AOC has launched a Building Official Program to minimize and manage risk. This program will improve our safety and code compliance to keep our iconic buildings maintained for future generations. A formal Building Official Program centralizes building code supervision and ensures that infrastructure and construction work being performed at AOC managed facilities and grounds consistently meet established building code standards.

## ENTERPRISE ASSET MANAGEMENT

Connected closely with the Building Official Program is another initiative designed to help us manage and maintain our assets. This effort is called Enterprise Asset Management (EAM). When this initiative is fully in place, we will be able to monitor usage of all our buildings, plants, machinery, vehicles and construction equipment. This can guide our understanding of what must be upgraded or replaced, and where we may need to make adjustments for the future. EAM will help us better care for what we have and will save countless dollars by improving the way we do things.

## CULTURAL BEHAVIORS, HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY AND AOC UNIVERSITY

Three additional Big Rock initiatives reaffirm the AOC's commitment to and investment in each one of us. Our workplace culture is at the heart of who we are as people and as an agency. The cultural behaviors transformation Big Rock will help us become the best version of ourselves expressed in how we work together, treat one another and engage with those we serve. Built around the four core values of RISE, the AOC will have a culture where all are valued and our workplace is free from harassment and/or discrimination of any type, where there is diversity and inclusion, and where we are all respected regardless of where we sit in the agency. We want all employees to help us understand what's happening in the AOC's current culture so we can take meaningful action. Keep an eye out for opportunities to participate in employee engagement sessions; help us shape the cultural transformation.

The AOC's customers are the reason we are here, but AOC employees are the agency's greatest strength and resource. The beauty and grandeur of the buildings are only a reflection of the beauty and dignity of the people who work here. The Human Capital Strategy is an investment in providing the best service to our employees. It will create opportunities to recruit new employees who will partner with our current dedicated staff, secure the best benefits and advancement opportunities for our employees, and ensure that employees are cared for professionally and personally.

AOC University is an organizationwide innovation that will provide opportunities for training, education, professional development and career advancement. This initiative will create fresh possibilities for all employees; it will build on the already impressive gifts and talents of each one of you. The Human Capital Strategy in coordination with AOC University will continue to build partnerships with educational and vocational institutions to help provide opportunities for employees by creating a workforce with the skills to continue serving, preserving and inspiring for years to come. Additionally, the Human Capital Strategy, in partnership with the cultural behaviors transformation, will work to foster improved employee well-being through employee engagement efforts aimed at improving the lives of our workforce in a meaningful way. We are setting the foundation for these efforts now. Stay tuned!

We are creating an organizational transformation that will result in an inspiring vision for the future, satisfied customers, and employees who consistently excel and prosper in their work — and are recognized for their efforts. These Big Rock initiatives create the opportunity for us all to be a part of building the AOC of the future. As the seasons change, let us RISE.

as the  
seasons  
change,  
let us  
*rise*



SEASONAL HIGHLIGHT

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# COLLECTING AND GROWING TEXAS NATIVE PLANTS FOR CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

WRITTEN BY DEVIN DOTSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE U.S. BOTANIC GARDEN

For 200 years, the United States Botanic Garden (USBG) has grown and shared thousands of plants with the public. While seasonal plants like poinsettias delight and inspire, the USBG's biggest treasure is the approximately 10,000 plants that form a permanent collection — a basis for the USBG's status as a living museum. These plants include rare and endangered plants, orchids, medicinal and food plants, U.S. native plants and others from around the world.

Throughout 2020 while the USBG was closed to the public, the Horticulture team continued stewarding its plant collection. Several Horticulture team members were paying special attention to a new batch of plants grown from seeds harvested during a plant-collecting trip to Texas.

**Left: The blooms of drought-tolerant redwhisker clammyweed (*Polanisia dodecandra*) now successfully growing at the U.S. Botanic Garden attract many pollinators.**



**The team found and collected seeds from the rare Glen Rose yucca (*Yucca necopina*), native only in a few counties in Texas.**

In 2018, the USBG's former Plant Curator Bill McLaughlin (now retired) joined colleagues on a collecting trip organized by the Plant Collecting Collaborative, a group of public gardens dedicated to propagating wild-collected plants from around the world for the purposes of increasing diversity in horticultural displays and collections and contributing to plant conservation. The 2018 trip sought to find and collect seeds from several locations in central Texas.

You might wonder why a garden in the mid-Atlantic would be interested in gathering plants native to Texas. According to McLaughlin, some areas of Texas have similar climates to Washington, D.C. "I was surprised because we started pretty far west in Texas, where I

expected the plant life to be much more adapted to dry air," said McLaughlin. "But we woke up to 70 percent humidity that didn't burn off until afternoon. I saw immediately that many plants there could live in D.C."

A major goal for the USBG was to locate Texas native plants that could grow well in an urban heat island like downtown Washington, D.C. and be part of adapted planting designs in response to a changing climate. "Many Texas plants, if they have a modicum of cold hardiness, can make great garden plants," said McLaughlin. Some plants from Texas display heat and frost tolerance, as well as drought tolerance, which could be very useful into the future.

After participating in a successful collecting trip to the Philippines in 2017 that supplemented the USBG's indoor Conservatory collection, McLaughlin was excited for this domestic trip where he could gather plants to grow and showcase outdoors. "Plants like wild sunflowers and blanketflowers — I love when the Garden can show the straight species and exactly where it came from," said McLaughlin. The provenance data indicating when and where a plant was acquired makes it valuable for conservation and breeding.

The Plant Collecting Collaborative team had some specific plants they were hoping to find but were also keeping their eyes out for other opportunities as they arose. Partners on the trip included Chicago Botanic Garden, Chanticleer Garden, The John Fairey Garden and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. It wasn't always glamorous, McLaughlin reported — there were several 100-degree days. "You don't have to worry about ticks and chiggers in those scorching temperatures. They recede!" said McLaughlin.



This prairie flameleaf sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*) is one of many the U.S. Botanic Garden has successfully grown from seeds collected on this trip. The plant demonstrates the target heat, cold and drought tolerance.

**DESPITE THE LONG, HOT DAYS, THE**

**GROUP WAS SUCCESSFUL IN LOCATING**

**MANY PLANTS FITTING THE HEAT- AND**

**DROUGHT-TOLERANT, COLD-HARDY TARGET.**

Despite the long, hot days, the group was successful in locating many plants fitting the heat- and drought-tolerant, cold-hardy target. The USBG has added seeds from more than 150 plants collected during this Texas trip into the plant collection. The Horticulture team has been determining the best courses for getting those seeds to germinate and then growing them into strong plants that can be planted in the outdoor gardens.

Gardener Anna Mische John is a member of the Gardens and Grounds team and is one of the key people responsible for growing the Texas plants. “I am really excited for the potential drought tolerance,” Mische John said. “We need plants that can handle climate change and

areas like the rain gardens in Bartholdi Park where plants need to be able to handle both inundation but also the long periods of dryness in between.”

The Horticulture team plans to incorporate some of the plants into current garden areas like the rain gardens and dry, full-sun areas, but also plans to swap out current plants that might have come from a horticultural greenhouse with unknown provenance with these new wild-collected plants. Mische John already has one such swap out planned — replacing a Texas persimmon in the Southern Exposure courtyard in the Conservatory with one brought back from the trip.



Every day, the team had to clean the seeds gathered to provide the best conditions for storing and future germination. Former USBG Plant Curator Bill McLaughlin is shown second from left.



The team gathered seeds from these wild sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) at the Cedar Hill State Park south of Dallas, Texas.

A number of the plants were exciting for the Horticulture team for a variety of reasons. Texas milkweed (*Asclepias texana*), was Mische John's favorite. "It's a beautiful garden plant with a great size and flowers for a long time," she said. "It's not a plant that I've really seen growing in other gardens or in the horticulture industry to purchase."

Some plants like halberdleaf rose mallow (*Hibiscus laevis*) and lemon beebalm (*Monarda citriodora*) are already large enough and have been planted outdoors. Try finding them on a future visit! Other plants like a little prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia engelmannii* var. *lindheimeri*) that germinated this winter is only the size of a pea. Cacti typically are slow growing, so the gardeners will have to care for it for many years before it reaches a size that can be displayed in the public gardens.

Caring for special plants is one of the things public gardens do best. The USBG is newly focused on updating its plant collection to replace unknown-origin plants with wild-collected ones, continuing to make the plant collection available for research, and expanding partnerships to further support science and conservation. People rely on plants for food, clean air, medicine and so much more. These vital organisms are facing threats such as climate change, a growing human population, and land loss due to development and agriculture. Bringing native plants into cultivation and expanding the genetic diversity of living collections is a critical component of ensuring plants survive these challenges. The USBG is proud to be part of the public garden community that is at the forefront of American native plant conservation.



FEATURE

## U.S. CAPITOL CLEANUP

WRITTEN BY REBECCA CHILLRUD

The events of January 6, 2021, left most of the nation at a standstill, but Architect of the Capitol (AOC) employees immediately went to work, restoring the building and grounds to their proper condition so that Congress could safely reconvene and inaugural preparations could get back on track. In this article, you'll hear from a few employees about the incredible effort they and their teams put forward in the aftermath of the U.S. Capitol breach.

## INSIDE THE U.S. CAPITOL

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The HVAC Shop took on an unexpected role during the breach, providing access to their eyewash stations to U.S. Capitol Police officers who were affected by pepper spray or tear gas. The team also reversed air flows to get the pepper spray cleared from the building. "In that moment, it was kind of unbelievable what was unfolding. But as it's unfolding, you just want to make sure everybody was okay," said Clinton Johnson. "It felt good to be able to help, but I just wanted to get through it."

As an AOC employee for nearly 15 years, Johnson said it was hard to see the building in that condition. "But I know that the AOC has a great staff and I know that we can restore it back to what it was," he said. "We'll persevere."

Ricardo Mitchell, with the AOC's Labor Division, was also on-site that day with his team. "We were here that day of the event. We got evacuated out of the building just like everybody else," he said. "Once they got

everything under control, we had to come back in the building and clean up the mess, because the Members were going to return to finish voting. We had to go into the chambers and prepare them so they would be able to come back."

"It was a lot of masks and a lot of broken glass, some broken furniture. They had to barricade the doors," he said. There was a lot of heavy lifting to get the House and Senate chambers back in shape.

Mitchell found it appalling to see the state the U.S. Capitol was in. "We put hard effort in every day to keep this building maintained. It was a lot of debris, you know? And we had a short time to clean it up. But we just got it done. I have a hardworking team," he said.

"I applaud my team for being so dedicated," Mitchell said. "We had to stay here and work extra hours in order to get the job done. We knew how important it was."

**"WE HAD TO STAY HERE AND**

**WORK EXTRA HOURS IN ORDER**

**TO GET THE JOB DONE. WE KNEW**

**HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS."**



AOC carpenter Jeremy Lauer boards up broken windows in the Senate corridor. Photo by Thomas Hatzenbuhler

## SECURING THE BUILDING

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The Carpentry Shop was also involved in the immediate aftermath. “That night, we went around and assessed the broken windows and some of the broken doors and tried to make sure the building was secure,” said Jeff Walters.

Many of the windows that were broken weren’t historic, but some of the interior, historic doors were damaged beyond repair.

“A lot of our job comes with unexpected challenges. There’s not a whole lot that surprises us anymore, but seeing the overall condition of the building that night, that, I would have to say, was a bit shocking. I’ve been with the Architect of the Capitol for maybe 22, 23 years. So I’ve seen a lot of the things that have gone on here, but I’ve never seen the building in such disarray,” said Walters.

Fortunately, Walters said, “I’ve got a crew that was with me that worked tirelessly to go out and get the things done that we knew had to be done. When we go around and look at something that needs to be repaired, we’re always looking at the solution part of it and not really standing back saying ‘Wow, I never thought that would happen.’ We just look at it as something that needs to be done.”

The Carpentry Shop took immediate steps to secure the building, but there were also longer-term repairs required. In the months since January 6, almost all the broken windows have been replaced and interim repairs have been made to all the damaged doors. Fortunately, the U.S. Forest Service was able to provide the AOC with priceless 100-year-old mahogany, which will be used to repair some of the damaged historic furniture.

# “IT’S DEFINITELY DISHEARTENING TO WITNESS THAT. IT’S SOMETHING WE CARE SO MUCH ABOUT.”

## THE U.S. CAPITOL GROUNDS

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The grounds around the U.S. Capitol were also in need of serious cleanup by the Capitol Grounds and Arboretum team. “We understand that the landscape is the first thing that everybody sees when they come to Capitol Hill,” said Jim Kaufmann. “Regardless of where they’re going, what building they’re going to, they’re coming on to the landscape first, and that’s their first impression of Capitol Hill.”

On the morning of January 7, the assessment of the grounds began. “Our team of arborists, masons, gardeners, laborers, mechanics, they were all involved in the cleanup effort, to try to clean as fast as possible,” said Katie Serock.

“It was tough for the crew because these are the areas, our grounds, that we preserve. That’s why we’re here,” said Kaufmann.

Serock agreed, “It’s definitely disheartening to witness that. It’s something that we care so much about. We are creating this vision for the entire country of having this pristine and organized U.S. Capitol. And when you see it go into disarray, it kind of sinks your heart a bit.”

“We have great employees that step up to the plate and get the work done,” said Serock. “That’s our job and we want it to be as beautiful as possible.”

## PREPARING FOR THE INAUGURATION

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With the inauguration scheduled for January 20, the AOC’s preparations were already well underway. This included the inaugural platform on the West Front, which the AOC builds from scratch for each inauguration.

“When I left there Wednesday, January 6, I was real happy and proud of our team,” said Kevin Grooms, who works in the Paint Shop. The white paint on the inaugural stands was completely finished, and they had made it through nearly three-quarters of the blue detail work.

“We worked until probably 12 o’clock Wednesday. And the blue paint that was on the deck was actually still wet.”

“We came back on Thursday morning, and I mean, it was completely destroyed,” he said. “It was just totally demolished. The blue wet paint, they tracked it all over.”

There was also trash and debris covering the stands. “Besides the stands having a lot of debris on them, there was a lot of broken glass. And there was a significant amount of residue from the tear gas. It was very difficult



Tim Herr repairs a door frame damaged in the U.S. Capitol breach.  
Photo by Sean Greene

cleaning up that area,” said Serock, who noted that the U.S. Capitol Police provided important guidance on how to safely handle these items.

“It was a real mess, it was unbelievable. You just can’t imagine,” said Grooms. “We’re still in shock over it.” But his team worked hard through the weekend. “When I left there Sunday afternoon, that deck looked like it did Wednesday.”

This was a tremendous amount of work in a short amount of time for the team, but “that’s just a small part,” said Grooms, who pointed out that these efforts are going on across the AOC. “Everyone’s doing the same type of thing, you know, everybody just wants to get everything done. We didn’t want this to affect us.”

Thanks to the hard work of these AOC employees, the U.S. Capitol was back in great condition for Inauguration Day, and many viewers were struck by the contrast from the scene just a couple of weeks before. One note we received said, “The Capitol looked beautiful today for the inauguration of a new president. When we think back to two weeks ago and remember the broken glass and the overturned furniture, we appreciate you, the people who restored the halls and chambers to their pristine condition.”

**“..WE APPRECIATE YOU, THE PEOPLE WHO**

**RESTORED THE HALLS AND CHAMBERS**

**TO THEIR PRISTINE CONDITION.”**

## EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

The incredible efforts of employees across the AOC have not gone unnoticed. People all across America were able to take solace in seeing order restored to the U.S. Capitol by our hardworking employees.

Morgan Green helps monitor the AOC's web feedback inbox. Typically, she receives a slow trickle of logistical emails throughout the day, but in the weeks following the breach, the inbox was flooded with thousands of messages of appreciation and offers of support.

"We've been sharing many of the messages with employees, and it has really helped raise the spirits of our staff to know that their work is appreciated," Green said.

In March, we published a special edition of Tholos with a selection of the notes of appreciation we have received. Many of those who wrote letters expressed their thanks not just for the work AOC employees did in the aftermath of January 6, but also for the work we do every day to serve, preserve and inspire.

One note resonated with our team: "As an American citizen, I thank you for cleaning the Capitol and allowing our government to continue their work. You have been the bright spot in the story that I explain to my young kids about what happened. I have been able to explain to them that citizens like you are who they should strive to be — dedicated keepers of democracy, even in uncertain times."



Signs were placed at the Peace Monument in memory of U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick. Photo by Thomas Hatzenbuehler

“As an American citizen, I thank you for cleaning the Capitol and allowing our government to continue their work. You have been the bright spot in the story that I explain to my young kids about what happened. I have been able to explain to them that citizens like you are who they should strive to be — dedicated keepers of democracy, even in uncertain times.”

DOING GOOD

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## HONORING OUR HEROES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES ROSENTHAL  
& THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

Architect of the Capitol employees that were on-site when the U.S. Capitol was breached January 6, 2021, recently received an award from Architect of the Capitol J. Brett Blanton. The employees were recognized for their heroic efforts that day and for persevering to fulfill our mission to serve, preserve and inspire when it mattered the most to so many across the country.



**Jose Acosta**



**James Adams**



**Brandon Armstrong**



**William Arrindell**



**Robert Baker**



**Kevin Brown**



**Gary Bullis**



**Junius Butler**



**Terrance Cardwell**



**Teri Cartridge**



**Douglas Chiles**



**Joshua Collinson**



**Glenn Davidson**



**Rina Diaz**



**Mark Emerman**



**Bennie Frazier**



**Robert Gatewood**



**Michael Gonzales**



**Abe Gray**



**Raphael Herring**



**Timothy Hinton**



**David Holmes**



**Clinton Johnson**



**Gregory Johnson**



**Jason Jones**



**Andrew King**



**Michael Lash**



**Wayne Leeman**



**Edgar Lopez**



**Dale Mathis**



**Ricardo Mitchell**



**Robert Money**



**Joseph Okes**



**Robert Petruska**



**Daren Pirner**



**David Rines**



**Alvaro Sanchez**



**Demond Stanley**



**Thomas Swann**



**Bradley Turner**



**Ernestina Uben-Reyes**



**Jeffrey Walters**



**Darryl Whited**



**Clarence Wise**

## PROJECT UPDATES

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# **AT THE AOC, IT'S ALWAYS HOME IMPROVEMENT TIME**

WRITTEN BY JUSTIN KIEFFER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AOC PHOTO BRANCH

At the beginning of 2020, as the country started to experience the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, people began to stay at home more often to help stop the spread of the virus. While people made their offices at kitchen tables or in their backyards, many started to see their home as a project, or really, as a series of projects, such as remodeling the kitchen, installing new carpet, painting, adding a deck, etc. Their goal was to take the time to make where they live perfect. They wanted to enjoy their home to the fullest and, when the pandemic finally ended, to invite their loved ones to visit and observe all the work done to beautify their space, which had served as their one safe place.

While most people have one structure to take care of, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is hard at work on multiple projects to care for the buildings across Capitol Hill. With the U.S. Capitol, House and Senate office buildings, Library of Congress and Supreme Court buildings, garages, and gardens, the AOC will never check off all of the items on its to-do list; taking care of the Capitol campus is an unending process. Most of the projects take years to complete and include studies, designs and finally construction and completion. Checking off one item on the AOC's to-do list is usually reward enough for all the people involved with these projects...and then it is on to the next one.

## U.S. CAPITOL STONE AND METAL PRESERVATION



**A worker carves a marble replacement leaf for a column capital.**

There is also a little difference between completing a task at home and working on a building like the U.S. Capitol. Tove Anderson, an architect by trade, is the Project Manager of the U.S. Capitol Stone and Metal Preservation Project. This is a phased project, meaning it is broken up into sections — think of painting the different sides of a house in four parts and each part is a phase in the project. In this case, the task at hand is cleaning, repairing and restoring the original stone of the U.S. Capitol.

The AOC recently completed Phase 2 of the project, which encompassed the south, or House, side of the building. Time and weather have taken their toll on the U.S. Capitol's stone. One focus of Phase 2 was the pediment, the triangular upper portion, which features multiple marble sculptures. While hard to see from the ground, these sculptures add to the true beauty of the U.S. Capitol. The workers on the pediment had to follow strict guidance and carefully mind their surroundings. They were required to wear hard hats with chin straps and no loose clothing or dangling tools to avoid further damaging the marble sculptures with an unintended bump or graze.



To properly preserve this portion of the building, a sculpture assessment was performed to determine the requirements and then a detailed plan was laid out and conducted, starting with removing an old bird deterrent system. Workers then performed several types of cleaning to remove surface soil and copper staining before they began the conservation work on the figures, which included repairing cracks and replacing or rebuilding deteriorated stone to restore the figures, such as the faces.



No project is smooth sailing all the way, especially with buildings as old as these. A specific hurdle for the pediment work involved seasonal temperature changes. For example, in the winter, the temperature and humidity were too low for the chemicals used to treat the stone to work properly — so the team isolated the work area and introduced heat and a mister system to increase humidity. This design created an ideal environment for successful restoration work.



Completing Phase 2 on time, even through a pandemic, which limited the number of people on-site, was a major success. “The pride and professionalism of all of the workers and the incredible quality of work is something I am most proud of on this project,” said Anderson.

Phase 3 of the project was recently awarded and work on the West Front (the center portion of the U.S. Capitol that faces the Washington Monument) will begin this year. After the fourth and final phase of the project (the East Front) is complete, Anderson will move on to the next project on the AOC’s list.

**Top: Application of the shelter coat.**

**Middle: Application of stone consolidation.**

**Bottom: A worker carves a replica of the Genius’s torch.**

## SENATE UNDERGROUND GARAGE AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION



**Top: Joe Smith, Construction Manager, and Nate Smith, Inspector, team up to review progress of punch-list items at Upper Senate Park.**

**Bottom: Laura Cameron, Assistant Director of the Project Management Branch, and Joy Jordan, Senate Jurisdiction Executive, share their project management and AOC experience with Margi Bergamini, Project Manager.**

Down the street from the U.S. Capitol, Margi Bergamini, a general engineer, serves as the Project Manager for the Senate Underground Garage and Landscape Restoration Project. Bergamini oversees the restoration and water-proofing of the garage and pedestrian tunnel, and more visibly, the Senate Park Plaza, fountain and landscaping located above the garage.

Historic preservation is a critical part of almost every AOC project and the team's efforts on this have been successful in preserving the original granite, light standards and stone benches. Additionally, beautiful new landscaping was planted, honoring the original design while occasionally using species more suited to the current environment and climate. For example, some of the heritage red oaks near the end of their life spans were replaced with saplings to accommodate the construction, and more importantly, to maintain the safety of the park.

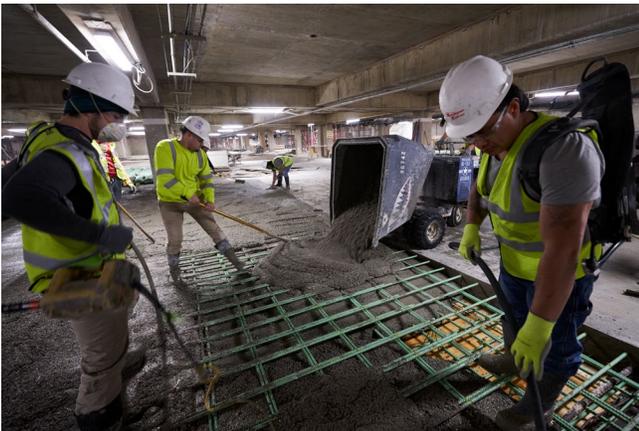
A project team that would normally share sketches, brainstorm and problem solve in person, relocated its collaboration into the remote world of phone calls, emails and sometimes video chats. "I am proud of the perseverance as we kept pressing forward through obstacles like this," states Bergamini. "The team is pleased that we maintained and restored Senate Park and brought it back to its original 1932 splendor."

As spring and summer arrive, the public can enjoy a newly restored area that brings more beauty to the Capitol campus.

## RAYBURN GARAGE INTERIOR REHABILITATION AND CENTER COURTYARD AND WEST PLAZA WATERPROOFING RESTORATION

Some house projects are less glamorous than others, but they are still vital and necessary to your home. Alex Santos, a mechanical engineer, spent the last several years working on garages (in addition to other types of projects) in the House Office Buildings, and currently manages the Rayburn Garage Interior Rehabilitation — another phased project. “The project includes heavy demolition and renovation activities while maintaining building operations without limiting Congress and their staff to conduct the nation’s business,” Santos says. “I am proud to be a part of a diverse team of disciplines, each dedicated to ensuring the success of the project through rigorous and effective communication and coordination protocols.”

Concurrently, he’s also managing the upcoming Center Courtyard and West Plaza Waterproofing Restoration, which will eliminate water leaks affecting the interior of the Rayburn House Office Building and its garage. The project is still in the construction procurement phase. Once it is finished, people will see the same beautiful plaza they see now, but the completed project will restrict water from seeping into the Rayburn Building and its rehabilitated garage.



**Top Left:** Workers apply high-strength, durable concrete on top of epoxy-coated reinforcement bars.

**Top Right:** Debris removal and recycling after hydrodemolition of the old concrete slab.

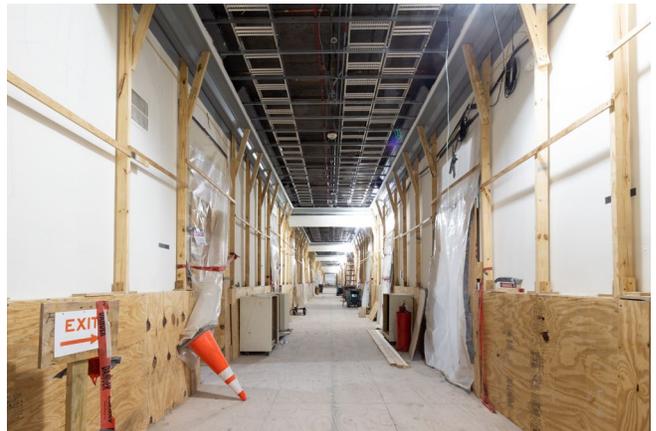
**Bottom:** A worker cuts an old concrete slab around columns that cannot be reached by hydrodemolition.

## CANNON RENEWAL

When it comes to a mega house project, where you renovate all the old rooms, look no further than the Cannon Renewal Project for a perfect comparison (although not many people live in a 100-year-old building). Every Member's suite, hearing room, elevator, bathroom and more in this building will be completely overhauled.

The Cannon Renewal team, managed by Donna Klee, a Capital Projects Administrator, recently moved in all the Members and their staff into the Phase 2 portion of the building, which is located on the Independence Avenue side of the building. The project team did not take a breath before starting Phase 3, which is on the First Street, SE side of the building. This phase will be almost the same work as the previous phases and will include construction of a completely new fifth floor.

"A multi-phased project, in an occupied building like the Cannon is an amazing endeavor and takes a dedicated team to make it work. As each phase is completed, we garner more lessons learned and the team grows stronger in our mission," said Klee.



**Left: Donna Klee, Capital Projects Administrator for the Cannon Renewal, speaks to workers during Phase 2 of the Cannon Renewal.**

**Right: Work on Phase 3 of the Cannon Renewal begins on all floors of the building.**

The AOC may have hundreds of skilled workers maintaining dozens of buildings, but it shares a sentiment with each family across this country that has spent a year in lockdown working on home improvement projects: We all look forward to having people visit again to enjoy the beautiful work we've done.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

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## WHY CONSIDER A COVID VACCINE?

WRITTEN BY CRISTIN O'BRIEN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

Vaccines offer hope against severe disease and death from the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. Here are the stories of five Architect of the Capitol (AOC) employees and their thoughts on the vaccine.

### WHY WOULD YOU CONSIDER TAKING A COVID-19 VACCINE?

"I've heard your concerns about getting a COVID vaccine, now tell me why you would consider taking it," Sean's doctor asked him. Skeptical of the vaccine because of the history of medical experiments on black and brown Americans, Sean Parrish, Electronics Mechanic Supervisor for the Senate Office Buildings, decided to consult his doctor before making a final decision.

"I would take it for my wife, my family, my grandbabies, my coworkers and their families and all the people I interact with every day," Sean replied.

"What about yourself?" she asked. "You ought to consider doing it for yourself, you need to love yourself, too."

Sean thought about this, and then made the decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine. "I never ask people to do something I'm not willing to do. I lead by example, and I believe respect is a two-way street. When my coworkers and I were offered the vaccine because of our close work with senators, I wanted to be the first one." Sean described being back in the shop after his first shot and listening to several coworkers talk about their own concerns and why they didn't think they would get vaccinated. He listened to every reason, then rolled up his sleeve to reveal the tiny bandage confirming he'd already gotten the first shot.

"As a supervisor, I need to listen to what employees have to say and get their perspective. I told them they should speak to their doctor like I did, get advice and answers from a medical professional, then make a decision. After my conversation with them, they chose to get vaccinated, too. The more people who get the vaccine, the faster we can conquer the virus."

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"I WOULD TAKE IT FOR MY WIFE, MY FAMILY, MY GRANDBABIES, MY COWORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND ALL THE PEOPLE I INTERACT WITH EVERY DAY."

## IN A TRIAL HELPING SCIENCE

Brian Klein, Assistant Director for Operations at the Capitol Power Plant, has been a strong advocate for following pandemic guidelines and is now an even stronger advocate for the vaccine. He and his wife and daughter are extremely careful; they have groceries and household items delivered to avoid going out to stores. From the time the first lockdowns started in March 2020 they have only gone out to socialize twice: Fourth of July and New Year's. Both were small gatherings that followed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for size and social distancing. That second outing on New Year's, however, gave them more than memories. "My wife and daughter started feeling ill three days after New Year's, and I got sick a day later. By midweek we were down for the count."

The first COVID tests came back negative. Based on their symptoms their doctor said the virus was probably not yet detectable to the rapid test, instructed them to assume they were positive and retest in a few days. The second set of tests came back positive, and the next few weeks were a blur. "I was the sickest I have ever been in my life," Brian said. "I don't remember those first two weeks well. I don't recall eating or drinking, but thankfully we did enough to get by."

No one in Brian's family required hospitalization, but the experience has led Brian to further champion caution to others. "I tell people to stay safe and follow the procedures. I remember lying in bed trying to decide if I needed to go to the hospital because my blood oxygen levels were low and remembering the horror stories of the people that didn't go to the hospital in time and didn't survive . . . I don't want anyone else to have to face those thoughts and decisions."

And Brian has taken it one step further — he volunteered to participate in a trial. "When I was filling out paperwork to get tested, there was a check box: 'Are you interested in a vaccine trial?' I hit yes."

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“I REMEMBER LYING IN BED TRYING TO DECIDE IF I NEEDED TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL BECAUSE MY BLOOD OXYGEN LEVELS WERE LOW AND REMEMBERING THE HORROR STORIES OF THE PEOPLE THAT DIDN'T GO TO THE HOSPITAL IN TIME AND DIDN'T SURVIVE . . . I DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO HAVE TO FACE THOSE THOUGHTS AND DECISIONS.”

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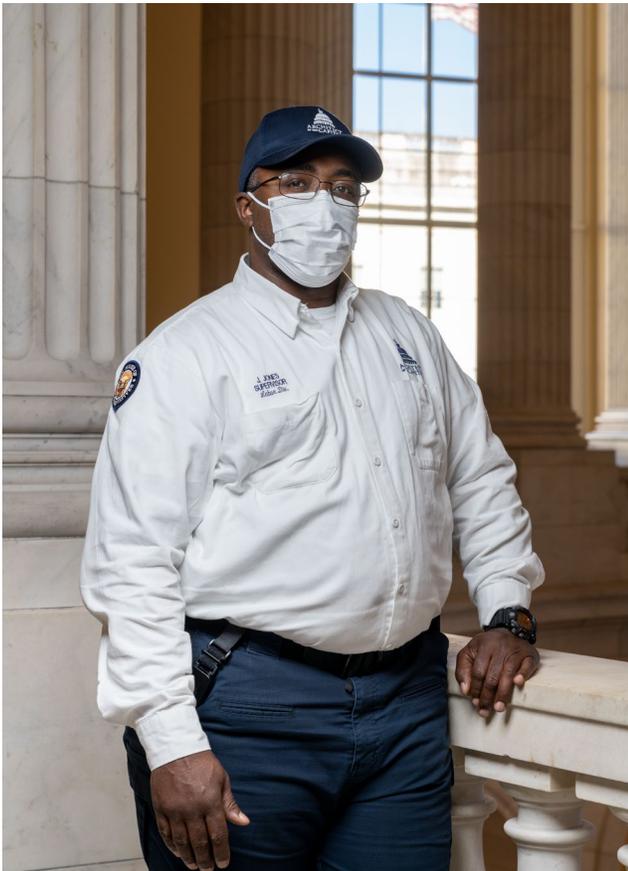
Brian got a call a month later about a Johnson & Johnson vaccine trial testing the effectiveness of one shot versus two shots. “I work in utilities, so I qualified for a vaccine already, but I had mixed feelings about pursuing one because I didn’t want to take a dose away from someone who needed it more than me — I had already had the virus and am younger and healthy, while neither my parents nor my in-laws had been able to get the vaccine and they are in high-risk age groups. This was an opportunity to potentially get a vaccine while also helping research. The trial was a no-brainer.” Brian received his first shot in the double-blind study in February and suspects he got the vaccine instead of saline because he felt flushed and had a headache the next day. He won’t know for sure until the study is unblinded. “Even if I didn’t get the vaccine, I’m in the study helping contribute to the science.”



## GETTING A VACCINE WILL HELP MY COWORKERS

For Jay Jones, Cannon Labor Shop Supervisor in the House Office Buildings, the pandemic precautions are just one more part of being safe on the job. "I advocate for my team to work safely. We have to have safety shoes, wear proper PPE for handling chemicals, use proper lifting techniques. We have to do all that, this is just another attribute. Wear your mask, social distance, watch out and tell others to put the mask up if they don't have it on. It's part of your job."

Jay sees getting a vaccine as another layer of safety, and he got a vaccine as soon as it was available to him. "People are sick and too many are dying. I don't want to get sick and getting the vaccine helps out my coworkers. After my vaccine I am less likely to be a carrier for the virus. I did my part and took it when it was my turn. And now I am waiting and prepared for my third shot if we need boosters."



JAY SEES GETTING A VACCINE AS ANOTHER LAYER OF SAFETY, AND HE GOT A VACCINE AS SOON AS IT WAS AVAILABLE TO HIM. "PEOPLE ARE SICK AND TOO MANY ARE DYING. I DON'T WANT TO GET SICK AND GETTING THE VACCINE HELPS OUT MY COWORKERS. AFTER MY VACCINE I AM LESS LIKELY TO BE A CARRIER FOR THE VIRUS. I DID MY PART AND TOOK IT WHEN IT WAS MY TURN."

## WHY WOULD YOU GET A COVID-19 VACCINE?

"I was debating about whether or not to get the vaccine, then I talked with some people who had had COVID. Their trials and tribulations with the virus were horror stories. I would never want to endanger anyone! That is why I got the vaccine." — **Gabrielle Stanton**, Human Resources Specialist, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

"I see the vaccine as an opportunity to regain some form of normalcy. Particularly, so that I can spend time with extended family and travel again." — **Deatra Trinidad**, Deputy Facility Manager, Supreme Court Building and Grounds

"The pandemic has effectively shut down our society for a year. The COVID 19 vaccine will let us move forward. This is a great relief to many people, including myself and my family."

**Dave Barber**, Day Cleaning Shop, Laborer/Recycler, House Office Buildings

"I want to take my wife to restaurants again, safely." — **Michael Lewis**, Acting Superintendent, Library Buildings and Grounds

"I got the vaccine because I believe science is real and so that I can see my family, hug my 84 year old mother, travel to see my dying father in law, go to museums and not wear a mask outside." — **Margaret Atwell**, Advanced Gardener Leader, U.S. Botanic Garden

"I miss so many things — seeing family, seeing my coworkers and seeing their work. Getting my vaccine was a huge relief and it feels like getting closer to normal." — **Lee Dennis**, Facilities Operations Supervisor, Capitol Grounds and Arboretum

"I want to take my mom on one last trip to see her sisters and create some wonderful memories for all of us without putting anyone at increased risk." — **Laura Cameron**, Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Engineer

"I decided to get the vaccine to protect myself, my family and fellow coworkers." — **Kris Foote**, Assistant Facility Manager, Supreme Court Building and Grounds

"As the Vice Chair of the JOSH committee I always think safety first, better safe than sorry!"

**Diana Phillinganes**, Project Manager, Library Buildings and Grounds



“I COULDN'T GO AROUND MY NEW GRANDBABY BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK INFECTING HER.”

## I TRUST THE SCIENTISTS

“I can talk to people over the phone, so I didn't meet people in person,” said Glenn Davidson, Electrician in the Capitol Building. Glenn follows the recommended precautions at work. “I only spent time outside work with my immediate family at home. We canceled all plans for birthdays, etcetera.”

When Glenn was offered a vaccine because he would be working the day of the inauguration, “I was among the first to say yes and I got my first injection that day. The injection site stung for maybe 30 minutes.” After his second shot Glenn said his arm was sore and he felt hot for a few hours the next day, though his temperature was normal. He views these side effects as insignificant compared to the disease itself. He now fields questions from coworkers about the side effects and about his thoughts on the vaccines. “I believe in science; I trust the scientists. I am like a car salesman for the vaccine, and I sell it. In this country, 500,000 people did not have the opportunity to get vaccinated and they are no longer here with us. I want to be here for a long time.”

Glenn said he got his shot to protect himself and his family. “I couldn't go around my new grandbaby because I didn't want to risk infecting her.” After receiving his second shot Glenn said he got to go hold his granddaughter and play with her for the first time since she was born last June. “It felt so good, and I am happy to do my part. If it weren't for my job, I wouldn't have been in line to get it yet. I am grateful for the opportunity.”

## WE NEED TO PROTECT THE KIDS

Bonnie Holod, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Client Services in the Senate Office Buildings, has two children under the age of 10. They are both learning remotely this year. Several months ago, when some schools in the area began welcoming back some students part-time her youngest said, “Mommy, I’m not going back to school until I have a vaccine.” At that time, Bonnie recalls, the news was predicting that vaccines might be approved for kids in the fall, but the likelihood of kids being vaccinated by then was slim.

“Thinking about it made me pay more attention to the science and Dr. Fauci when he talked about immunity. I looked into the numbers and realized we aren’t going to reach herd immunity in the U.S. without immunizing kids. Even if every adult says yes, give me a vaccine, we can’t get there without including some of the kids.” [Children make up about 24 percent of the U.S. population, and herd immunity for COVID-19 is estimated between 70 and 90 percent.] “I had this strong visual in my head of adult elephants on the savannah surrounding the smaller ones, fulfilling an obligation to protect their young from danger. When I was unexpectedly offered a vaccine dose, that image of the elephants immediately came back to my mind. I was nervous about getting a vaccine, we don’t know the long-term effects, but we need to protect the children. I said yes and got my first dose.” Bonnie received the Pfizer vaccine and said she had a sore arm after the first shot. After the second shot she had a fever, chills and heavy fatigue for the first night, but the next day she felt great.

Bonnie reflected that getting the vaccine was part maternal, part analytical. “My motivation to get a vaccine is the mom in me, as well as the analyst. I made the decision with my right and left brain, looking at the science and doing the analysis with the numbers. I also listened to my heart — as a mom, I have an obligation to do it.”

Bonnie’s children are comforted by the fact that she has been vaccinated. “I go into the office twice a week. When I come home, they are still frustrated that they have to wait while I change and wash my hands before I let them hug me. They understand that the vaccine is an extra layer of protection on top of the other precautions we still have to take. And while they’re not excited by the idea of getting a shot, they accept that a vaccine is in their future. They know it is for the good of society, but the real reward will be getting to see their grandma.”



“MY MOTIVATION TO  
GET A VACCINE IS THE  
MOM IN ME, AS WELL  
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Legislative and Public Affairs  
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16  
Washington, DC 20515

## Tholos Spring 2021

The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

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